

Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

When Earth Beholds Her King

POWER

THE TYRANNY OF USELESS THINGS

OUR GOAL

KEEPING PROMISES

MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

REFLECTIONS ON THE GRACE OF GOD

Megiddo Message

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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Hanna, Alta., Can.

Mrs. R. K.

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Sherburne, N. Y.

H. S.

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Onchunga, N. Z.

R. B. L.

Keeping in Touch

Dear Brother:

It is so important that we keep in touch with one another in order to secure the spiritual help we need. We who are out so far from the fountain head of truth need and must have the help of you who are strongly established in the *one faith*. Through the mail service we can discuss God's marvelous plan for His people, thus helping one another to lay aside the besetting sins which so stubbornly cling to us.

Hornbeck, La.

R. L. C.



SERIES:

THY KINGDOM COME
PART FOUR

When Earth Beholds Her King—

CONQUEST, CONVERSION, REDEMPTION

FOR millennia earth has been strewn with the wreckage of defeated civilizations. Why? Why has the conqueror proved inadequate as a ruler? Men have exerted physical force to subdue their enemies, but to convert those enemies, to control, to govern them wisely, they have lacked the capacity. In other words, to the physical challenge leaders of men respond valiantly, and civilizations are born. But in response to the moral challenge they too often betray their selfish interests. Then it is—all because of the men at the top—that civilizations decline, decay, and die. How long must earth be victim of this immemorial tragedy, this endless, vicious cycle?

Once all eyes focused eagerly on our Western World as the organizer of an ideal universal society, but can this boasted Western civilization unify the world while we quarrel among ourselves? while we raise impregnable race barriers in this "land of the free"?

Barriers of nationalism, of race, of creed have made men enemies instead of brothers. From whence is to come the desired unifying force? How can be achieved that ideal civilization which is secure from external aggression and internal uprising?

Christ—"the desire of all nations," "King of kings and Lord of lords"—comes to answer to this need. Unlike any of His predecessors, He and His associate rulers are completely qualified for the position. Why? Because they have learned, down to the finest detail of thought, to rule themselves. History teaches that it is difficult rather than easy circumstances that produce *men*. These men—kings and priests of God, and Christ, "prince of the kings," have for nearly six millennia faced a hostile world and stood rigidly for truth and right though it drove them to prison, to the rack, to Golgotha, and to the arena. Through much tribulation they secured their honors. Victory cannot intoxicate them, nor can power make them indiscreet, for they are champions in self-mastery. They will employ the power at their command to improve the lot of their subjects, to lead them onward and upward, to teach them to be brothers, to observe the Golden Rule. With the right men, men whose lives inspire imitation, at the top, civilization can progress eternally. And these are the right men, trained by God and by Him crowned.

After earth is startled by the proclamation of Christ's proximity, shaken by the resurrection of His servants, perplexed by the absence of His people who meet the Lord in the air, then

Earth Beholds Her King

It is the event of the ages for which all creation has unwittingly groaned from the dawn of civilization.

"As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24: 27). "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, . . . and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (Zech. 14: 4, 5).

Here we see the mystical body, composed of Christ and the associate rulers or joint-heirs: "The Lord . . . and all the saints." Or, as envisioned by the Revelator, "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (14: 1).

The marriage has taken place, with the accompanying ecstasy. Now Christ, the rightful heir, proceeds to claim His throne.

World - Wide Summons

First, upon the arrival of the King, He sends forth warning to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (v. 7).

The new Ruler's first step toward creating an ideal universal society is by an appeal to glorify one God. Well He knows that when creedal barriers are destroyed, when rival gods are broken and banished, then racial and national barriers will cease to exist. In the true Church, racial and national barriers never did exist. Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman. A foreigner was the hero in His parable of The Good Samaritan. A Syrian and a Sidonian were cited as worthy examples to the stiff-necked town of Nazareth. "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10: 34, 35). In the Church of God "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3: 11).

Christ's ultimate goal at His return is "one nation" (Ezek. 37: 22), and His first step toward that end is a demand for mankind to worship and glorify one God.

Earth will be faced with the ultimatum: submit or perish. It will be the hour of decision (Joel 3: 14). As

following Israel's idolatry when Moses cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me," so mankind must come over on the Lord's side or suffer the consequences.

Diverse Reactions: Submission, Resistance

The summons to "fear God, and give glory to him" will be the opportunity for which one particular group of people have waited. This will mean an end to the famine for those who felt the pangs of spiritual hunger at the time of the resurrection and Judgment, those who scoured land and sea in a futile quest for the word of the Lord, their longings then unsatisfied, because the saints—those who had knowledge of future events—were away at Judgment. Now by submission to the Lord they can secure food and protection. The Lord's kind compassion and care for them is described in beautiful language in Joel 2:32. "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."

Another class, "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies," shall gather together to make war against Christ (Rev. 19:19). In the prophetic language of the Psalmist, "Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed, saying, 'Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us.' He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 'I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.' I will tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, with trembling kiss his feet, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (Psalm 2, R.S.V.).

A blessing and protection for the suppliants, destruction for the rebels.

The Bible refers to Christ as earth's Redeemer." How acute our need is! But by two apt illustrations Jesus implies that that redemption for which earth has blindly groped for centuries, that peace and good will which she assumes as innate desire, must be literally forced upon her. "As it was in the days of Noah . . . and Lot . . . even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:26—30). In both cases the only means of coping with wickedness was by eliminating the incorrigibles. So now—

Armageddon

This term has long been the subject of speculation among scholars. Armageddon has been everything from the conflict between Christianity and early persecutors to the age-old clash between good and evil. However, there need be no confounding of the term if we look candidly at the Word. Revelation 16 specifies Armageddon to be the site of the last great conflict between the forces of good and the forces of evil.

"I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . . And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16:13, 14, 16).

"Frogs" is from the Greek *batrachos*, meaning, in a symbolic sense, "a disease of the tongue, . . . to stammer, idle talk." Obviously, it is the evil powers, civil and ecclesiastical, extant on earth at Christ's second advent (the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet) who, threatened with destruction, instigate the sinister movement. Their violent propaganda will rouse the kings of the earth and their armies to battle against Christ at Armageddon.

This passage follows consecutively in the grand crescendo of events which begins (ch. 14) when Christ and the saints stand on Mount Zion and issue warning to all nations to "fear God, and give glory to him." The results of the battle are revealed in the next chapter. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (17:14). Chapter 18 is an exultation over the fall of the evil system, Babylon with her costly but accursed system of commercialized superstition; chapter 19, the triumph of the Church. So it is clear that Armageddon is simply one in a specified chain of events which follows our Lord's return.

Armageddon, the Hellenized form of Har-Megiddo or the Mount of Megiddo, is some sixty miles north of Jerusalem. The broad plain of Megiddo stretches before this mountain, which for thousands of years had been an imposing stronghold. Armageddon has been the gateway between two continents, for possession of which the emperors and kings of Asia and Africa have struggled. Through the pass which it commands, the armies of Egypt marched for 1,000 years, and fought many battles in these hills overlooking the Valley of Esdraelon. The Crusaders of the Middle Ages also fought many battles there.

Being the crossroad between the Orient and the Middle East, the location is a logical place for battle and the gathering of armies. This is the place, then, where the Battle of God Almighty will be fought, or at least where it will begin, and will spread until the forces of evil are brought under complete control of Christ and the saints. Zechariah 14:2 is specific: "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle."

It is hard for us to believe that the ecclesiastical and civil powers of earth will exercise the audacity to fight against Christ at His return. If today we should secure an audience with the Pope, and should ask him if he would not welcome the return of Christ to earth to head the Church and to unite all the segments of humanity into one ideal society, we can imagine that he would hail such a prospect with delight, and that he would be indignant if told that he would head the aggressive forces against Christ.

Let us assume in generosity to our fellow humans that the powers of earth who resist Christ's decree to "fear God, and give glory to him" do not actually recognize Him

as the Son of God. How could they fight if they knew! Perhaps they will think Him to be another Usurper, a Dictator, against whose invasion their only defense is united aggression. When they cope with His army—men whom the sword cannot wound (Joel 2:7, 8), men who are themselves perpetual flying machines (Isa. 60:8), an army upon which all their implements of war, their missiles, hydrogen bombs, nuclear weapons, have no effect—they will believe them to be unknown supermen from another planet. Surely, if they were acquainted with the King of kings and His mission, if they comprehended His plan, and accepted His ultimatum, they would not, they could not, resist Him!

But when He challenges all their established institutions, everything that they have known and loved and cherished, they will fight to the bitter end to save their system, their thrones and power.

The prophets, Jesus and the apostles all testify that it will take nothing less than the judgments of God to bring the world into a state of peace and obedience to divine law. Does the thought of another world war bring dismay to the heart? Remember, this war will be different. It will be a contest between right and wrong, truth and error; and for the first time in history right will not be on the scaffold, wrong upon the throne. The use of force will be employed as an instrument of justice; none shall be cut off except the sinners who refuse to reform. Before Christ can reign in righteousness, before peace can bathe the earth with the healing dew of morning, Christ must wrest the scepter of empire from its present holders.

Many passages in the Book describe Armageddon. According to the Psalmist, "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints" (149:5-9).

According to Isaiah, "Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible" (13:6, 9, 11). "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (66:15, 16).

According to Malachi, "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (4:1). When shall we look for that day? Malachi specifies that it will follow the advent of Elijah the prophet who comes to announce the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" (v. 5), necessarily at His second advent, for His first advent was in no sense a dreadful day.

According to Jesus, "A certain nobleman went into a

far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom" that He reckoned with His servants, rewarding them according to their works. Then He issues the decree, "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:12, 13, 15, 27). This is Armageddon.

Results of the Battle

The immense destruction of human life incident upon the conquest of the earth by its rightful King is described in Zechariah. "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein" (13:8). In the face of this newly arrived Power and its destructive advance, the surrender of the "third part" is no more than might be expected. In fact, the marvel is that so large a proportion should be so stubborn as to resist the change, even to their own death. One would expect people to be more sensible, but this proves how foolish they can be; and God, who can read the heart and the future of every individual, proposes to make a clean sweep of all who have no possibilities for His Kingdom. To leave the overtly rebellious would be to invite a return of present conditions. The survivors of the cleansing judgments are a class who are at least controllable by law, and will form the nucleus of a new world, from which will develop the subjects of the Kingdom of God.

The fall of Babylon—often described in the Book—expresses figuratively the results of God's judgments. Revelation 18 is the most familiar passage. There we read of the fall of spiritual Babylon with her costliness, her pride and superfluities. When the present order, this vast, world-wide system of error and superstition, misrule and exploitation, crashes before the judgments of the Eternal, when there ceases to be profit in war and its kindred iniquities, when the teaching of fables is sternly suppressed, when "no man buyeth her merchandise any more," great will be the ruin thereof, and loud the wailing (Rev. 1:7). Stripped of her jewels, her purple and scarlet raiment, Babylon the Great shall lie, broken and humbled, in the dust, her power for evil destroyed.

With all evil suppressed, the road of true progress is thrown wide open for all mankind.

Conversion of the Nations

Hushed is the din of war: "the best is yet to be." "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). Righteousness! Beautiful, inspiring, thrilling word! It was the intent and purpose of the war and now its fruitage is beginning to ripen. Then, as recorded in Jer. 16:19, "the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit" (an admission which reveals the futility of "religion" today).

Simultaneous with the battle, and extending beyond, a vast educational program will be in progress. Men will "learn righteousness." Who are to be the teachers? We consult Isa. 66:18, 19. "I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory,

(Continued on page 11)

POWER

THERE are creatures on this earth, larger, swifter, stronger and fiercer than man, but man has ever copied, borrowed, and appropriated whatever he felt he could use for his advantage, until now man predominates. Probably the most useful thing man has appropriated is power. The strength of the ox, the horse, and the ass bore man's burdens and plowed his fields, producing enough food for both. Today man borrows freely the power of the waterfall, the wind, the stored energy of the sun in coal, oil, gas, of the atom, and soon perhaps the radiant energy of the sun. With this borrowed power man does prodigious amounts of work which he could never accomplish if he had to rely only upon his own frail strength. By the free interchange of ideas, the most powerful things in creation, he has built a complex civilization which, for all its faults, is one of the wonders of the universe.

Spiritually, the same thing is true of man, so weak and frail, so mortal. He may live three score years and ten, or the thread may snap without warning, and his life with its intelligence goes down to the grave, terminated. And yet, one of these frail lives can often exert a tremendous power over others, either for good or evil.

Constantly we borrow ideas from others and use them for ourselves. This is the power of education. The ideas may be good for us, or they may be bad for us, but we go right on borrowing these ideas, hoping they will do something to our advantage. At the same time, perhaps unknown to us, we are lending our ideas to others; for no life is without significance in its sphere.

Man has other related powers which flow outward. They are the powers of suggestion, persuasion, example and inspiration. There have been people who have with their own ideas, words and conduct so influenced the thoughts and conduct of other people that large segments of society have received great benefit. But none of these ideas which have originated in the minds of men have in them the power to expand man's life beyond the grave. No matter how beneficial they have been to living men, their benefit to each man came to an end when death claimed him. Could we acquire by appropriation or gift the power to transport our life and personality beyond the grave, what a wonderful power that would be, and what a boon it would be to those who could obtain it!

Yet there is in existence, available to all, just such a power. Nearly two thousand years ago, a man without family, position or wealth said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). An itinerant laborer, often in trouble with the authorities, and sometimes in prison, he was the offscouring of creation to the people who "really counted" in those days. Yet, singlehanded, this man spread the glad news of the Kingdom of heaven on earth across the Roman Empire. And all the Emperor's legions could not wipe it out in five hundred years. The apostle Paul, we must agree, made a wonderful success of borrowing the power of the Gospel and combining it with his own abundant energy and zest for life and more life. He might be described as a super-powerful "transformer station" in the Eternal's great power system.

To him this power to salvation was not a thing to be stored or confined, but to flow out in usable form to "who-soever will." Through his medium, we can learn how to obtain and use it as freely and purposefully as he did nineteen centuries ago. He has labored abundantly, and we may enter into the fruits of his labor. This is progress; this is the interchange of ideas and examples which builds the civilization of God's eternal future.

In I Cor. 1:18 Paul says, "... the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are [or shall be] saved it is the power of God." Jesus said the same thing: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). This is not a wooden cross on a hill outside Jerusalem; it is a symbol, not of vicarious atonement or even of an organization, but of a way of daily living, of complete self-renunciation. This denying of self is foolishness to the world, which counts it impossible, but it is the theme, the center, the power of the Gospel, and the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, the only thing that will extend our life beyond the grave.

There are many excellent things which we may borrow from the Gospel which will increase our comfort and worth in this life, and we should covet every one of them. But unless we are prepared to go "all-out" in its use and borrow its power to salvation, which means a completely surrendered, completely obedient life, we have not obtained one thing which will last beyond the grave, and at the end we shall differ in no respect from the unenlightened multitudes in the broad way which leads to everlasting destruction.

The Gospel, for instance, brings us great and superior knowledge; but until we borrow the power of the cross of self-denial, our knowledge has not been profitable to us. The knowledge of the Gospel gives us hope and stability and confidence, but until our life is completely controlled by its principles—"none of self and all of Thee"—our hope of eternal life is vain and our confidence only self-deception.

There are no power shortages or power failures with the Almighty. As mortal beings we are weak and frail. We can do little with our own strength, but we have the knowledge that we can borrow of the great and limitless power of the cross of self-denial and use that power to transport ourselves beyond the barrier of mortality into the eternal Kingdom of God on this earth. Then we shall share the power of God in its fullness; possessing immortal life and light within ourselves, we shall become "generating stations" to bless the world and worlds yet uncreated with powers which we cannot, in our mortal state, comprehend.

We may rest assured that every day we shall have more than one trial that we have had before and failed to meet. But if we allow these little everyday happenings to make an impression deep enough to impel us to practice godlikeness, we shall find that our life flows smoother and smoother, and the little petty things that vexed and tried our souls will lose their power.

The Tyranny of Useless Things

"**B**E CAREFUL to stifle little things," once wrote an eloquent preacher, "that as fast as they spring up they be cut down and trod upon, for if they grow by numbers they make the spirit perish." This thought goes to the very heart of the problem of the one who would aspire to greatness in the sight of the Almighty. Small discomforts, petty annoyances, little trials can be as dangerous to our eternal welfare as some great trial. Paul says, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Expressing the same thought in another way, a sting can be as dangerous as a wound. Consider the bee sting which can and does sometimes prove fatal.

With a Christian, the building of a perfect character is fundamental; without it there is no real hope. It is the result of unrelenting toil in which the lovely fruits of the Spirit are developed by patience, care, and persistence of a good and honest heart. It is the result of refusal to yield to the tyranny of having our own ways and to the "wear and tear" of the small trials which of necessity fill a large place in every life.

These petty annoyances crowd every path of work and pleasure if we let them. How we handle them determines whether we will brush them aside with a strong, willing mind or permit them to spring up and choke our growth unto holiness. We are in command when we have a "thus saith the Lord" determining our conduct, and when we do not compromise or succumb to every annoyance.

To be engaged in trivia, whether of things or of thoughts, is a detriment to our efficiency and creative power. We lose sight of our objective in this life when we are so burdened. An army which is to move rapidly and strike swift, decisive blows carries only what is absolutely essential. It leaves all impediments in the rear and relies for its safety upon its mobility. Paul warns us to "lay aside every weight" and to cast down every imagination and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. James says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

Putting off decisions about what to do with these impediments is even worse than storing useless rubbish in the cellar. Such delayed decisions accumulate until they are a definite source of uneasiness and worry, thus hindering all onward progress on the road to the Kingdom. The night is far spent and a new day is about to dawn. There is great need to make haste to discard the useless things we have been hoarding—all our own natural ways and thoughts. Strength comes through hope, and hope encourages action, so look them squarely in the face, grapple with them resolutely and work your way out from under them. There is no obstacle lying across the road to the Kingdom that will not yield to steady work. Inch by inch the greatest mountain ranges yield to the persistent storming of the drill, until an open passage is made through their mighty barriers for the convenience of commerce or travel. The highway to eternal life is open for those who are ready to receive and act upon the requirements laid down by the Almighty. Nothing is easy that we are not willing to do; nothing is hard that God commands if we have a willing mind. With a willing mind the yoke

will always be easy and the burden light because the weight will be on the things that matter and these are easy to carry. It lies in the power of each of us to live with the greatest thought, the noblest ideal, the most inspiring achievement in the history of man—that of becoming worthy to be made like unto the angels; or we can content ourselves with the mediocrities, the commonplace and the vulgarities of our times.

The life of a Christian involves a marked indifference to the outside world; an indifference less of contempt than of preoccupation with higher things. He has an inward purpose to which he constantly directs his attention: the development of a character that will be acceptable to his Lord. Winds and storms are matters of as little consequence to him as to the great ocean steamers which sail to their havens almost disregarding all external circumstances. They are set to a course and nothing can swerve them.

The strongest and most victorious figure in history is Christ. Among all men who ever lived none ever so completely submitted his will to the will of the Father as did He. He did not hesitate to discard the things which He learned to be of lesser value, but willingly laid them aside so as to obtain the greatest.

From the time when Paul beheld the light on the Damascus road, he was immediately obedient to the heavenly vision. He had many hard battles with his lower nature, but at the end of his race he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Should not such a reward encourage us to sort out the useless things, the treasured trash that clutters our lives, that we too may be worthy of a crown in that day?

Our Goal

EVERY important project has a goal. In the field of construction all large buildings—and for that matter a great many smaller structures—are built with a time limit specified in the contract. A student enrolling in a school or university has a definite goal in mind. In from four to eight years he hopes to complete his formal education and be ready to embark on his chosen career. A general in the army, given the responsibility for winning a battle, keeps the goal of victory constantly before his eyes, and all his planning and maneuvers are carried out with one object—to win that battle.

The average person has some goal in life. It may be to provide the necessities of life for himself and his family, or it may extend higher and seek to give them the best that this life can offer. He who has no goal merely exists; he does not live.

We all could conjure up visions of spending our life lying under a palm tree on the shore of a beautiful lake in the warm sunshine and without a care in the world. But unfortunately—or *fortunately*—that cannot be. Noth-

ing constructive could be accomplished that way. We would be as useless as a cat on the hearth. Some definite goal is necessary for worth while accomplishment. Even in this present life we owe a great debt of gratitude to God for our blessings and to a host of men and women who have and are performing many tasks to make our life work easier and more efficient and our surroundings more pleasant.

Important as a goal is to us in temporal pursuits, to the Christian it is indispensable. When the great Creator made this earth and placed man upon it His goal was to fill the earth with His glory, or men and women who would form characters to conform to His standard. Everything is working out according to God's plan, and if we are to be a part of that plan we must not only have a goal but work with all our might to reach it.

Our ultimate goal is the reward of life eternal with the blessings that go with it, but our immediate goal is moral perfection—which means to conquer our naturally wild and rebellious nature and become molded into the image of our Pattern. Just as the general of an army (as mentioned previously) bends every effort to reach the goal of victory, so must we. For the goal we must reach is more difficult of attainment than his. We are told, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16: 32). It must not be inferred from this that a passive disposition is all that is necessary to reach our goal. On the contrary it requires positive determination. The apostle Paul said, "My one thought is, by forgetting what lies behind me and straining to what lies before me, to press on to the goal for the prize" (Phil. 3: 14, Moffatt).

Some of the most outstanding accomplishments in this world have been attained by persons of average ability who possessed a dogged determination to reach their goal. For this reason it is impossible to measure accurately a young person's talents and predict what his success or failure in a given field will be. For often a person possessing determination and the capacity for hard work, even though natural ability is limited, may far out-distance his more talented rival who lacks persistence. Just so in the spiritual. The possessor of an even temperament and placid disposition may seem to have a natural advantage; and so he has. But these things can also prove a handicap, unless he is careful to keep his determination and "drive" at a high pitch. To use a dreadful word, he becomes lazy; he fails to live up to his best; while others with limited natural endowments may, with determination—natural or acquired—turn in a far better performance.

Unless our mind is constantly fixed on this most important goal we shall accomplish nothing lasting. We will drift with the tide. Inertia will capture us, and we will coast to destruction.

How different the ending of the person who has his mind fixed on the goal of moral perfection. He travels as straight a road as possible. If he should find himself on a detour he immediately gets back to the main road headed straight for his goal. Obstructions are not stumbling blocks but steppingstones to him. He reaches the gates of the eternal City and the Judge says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of thy Lord." He has arrived. May we each one help each other to reach his goal.

Keeping Promises

CHARLES JAMES FOX was an English statesman who lived from 1749 to 1806. At the age of nineteen he was elected to Parliament from a pocket borough which his father had purchased for him. His abilities earned him a junior ministry in the government of Lord North. His strong and openly expressed sympathies for the rights of the American Colonists forced him from the government by the time he was twenty-five.

His independent thinking, sense of right and brilliant oratory placed him at the head of any cause he espoused, and for most of his career this meant he headed His Majesty's loyal opposition, when His Majesty was none other than George III.

But none of his great abilities ever equaled his sterling worth of character as a man. For this blessing of character, Mr. Fox gave greater credit to his father than anyone else, largely because of the example the father was careful always to set for the son. The most significant incident occurred when Charles was very young.

The Fox family lived on a large country estate which the father spent much time in beautifying. At one time he was planning a brick wall in the garden. The lad was equally interested and had secured from his father his promise that the wall should be built at a time when he could be there to witness and enjoy the entire procedure. But in the busy activity of life, something happened and the wall was built without the little lad ever seeing so much as a single brick laid, and he was disappointed.

When he reminded his father of the promise now hopelessly broken, no excuse was offered, but the father said promptly, "Promises are made to be kept, be they made to man or child, and I shall keep my promise to you. I promised that you should see this wall built and you shall certainly see it built." Immediately he arranged to have the wall torn down and removed. Later the wall was built again, when father and son could view and enjoy together the pleasure of its construction and the workmen's skill. Regardless of cost the promise was kept.

If the keeping of the promise was dramatic, the results were even more so. Charles James Fox said that no one had ever said or done anything which had influenced his thinking and his life so profoundly as the example of his father in going to such great trouble to keep this simple promise to him, a small lad. There had been nothing to compel his father, no influence apart from the inward force of a character insistent upon being honest, even with a little child. By his character, exemplified by this single act, the elder Fox walked beside his son through the years of youth and manhood, through success and failure, ever exerting an influence for the best.

Each person who lives is an influence for something on someone, somewhere, sometime. It just cannot be otherwise. Because children are so impressionable, our example often has a more conspicuous effect on them. Example is a force to be reckoned with to the last hour of life. "Our influence—our shadow selves—may fall where we may never be."

We who have this wonderful knowledge of God's saving truth enjoy telling others about it, but are we too often missing that greater opportunity for influencing others

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Musings of the Editor

A MAN of keen observation once remarked, "Not many people actually feel contented and happy for more than a few moments at a time. With most people, the happy moments are interspersed with a pendulum-like swing into gloom and misery." That is because they pursue things which lead to temporary enjoyment rather than the lasting pleasures which God has promised.

Tuning In In this respect we compare well to a radio. Our happiness depends largely upon our selectivity. If we determine each day to tune in only on love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance, we will soon learn to turn the dials of our thoughts against hatred, selfishness and jealousy.

The marvelous human radio is so delicately adjusted that the entire body is sensitive to and is modified by each thought. About us are the elements both of godliness and worldliness, appealing for our reception. While listening to one program we are excluding the other. We may tune in on the program of godliness and not allow the clearness of our reception to be interrupted by selfishness, hatred, jealousy or foolishness.

Anniversary Observance

With the return of autumn and its frosty air and fire-hued trees, comes the anniversary celebration on October 1, of the man—the late Rev. L. T. Nichols, 1844—1912—whose life's effort lit again the lamp of truth, the blessed light which lights our path today. Without it we should be stumbling along in the same spiritual darkness as the countless masses of our unenlightened fellow men.

For the benefit of visitors who came early to attend Sunday's services, Sept. 29, a short program on the evening of Sept. 30 was enjoyed. The children featured, presenting two pantomimes in interesting fashion, namely, "The Good Samaritan," and "A Maiden's Faith," concerning Naaman the Leper. An inspiring poem, "O Thou Eternal One" (see MEGIDDO MESSAGE, Jan. 29, 1955), directed our thoughts to celestial realms for a season.

On Tuesday, Oct. 1, activities began with a devotional service at the church at 8 A. M. This solemn service commemorated in song and address the man who founded the Megiddo Mission over half a century ago. There was the usual touching grave-side service at 3 P. M. at Mount Hope Cemetery and decorating of the graves with bouquets of bright autumn flowers.

The principal feature of the celebration was a drama, "The Prince of Life," presented by a cast of 35 men. This drama suggested the impact of the ministry and message of Jesus Christ upon the minds of His contemporaries.

It was the conclusion of all that it was good to have been present to witness and receive the spiritual uplift which such occasions at the Megiddo Mission always afford.

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

(Continued from the back of this page)

practice of your religion such that it will save your soul?

Your heart and religion will never be right until, as Jesus said, you deny yourself daily. With Simon it was the praise of men and their crowding about him. Now, what he should have done (and what you and I should do) and what Philip should have insisted on his doing, is to discover himself and confess to himself his besetting sin, and every day drive another nail of self-crucifixion into it. And continue driving a nail each day until that besetting sin is dead.

In his bitter moments Simon did the very opposite to what he should have done. He tried to have Peter share his popularity with him—for money. First, he wished merely a share, but back in his mind was the evil thought eventually to excel and be the "great one" again. That was the time he should have sought obscurity, and at such times of temptation we too need to learn that lesson. Never seek to hear what people are saying about you! Starve that self-seeking quack that is still in you! Beat him "black and blue," as Paul tells us he did (I Cor. 9: 27), every time he shows his self-admiring face.

It was the thoughts of Simon's heart that made Peter denounce him so severely. Sinful as the proposal was, Peter offered Simon hope through prayer and repentance. "If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."

But what about the thoughts of your own heart? Are the self-seeking and self-exalting thoughts of your heart cherished, or are they the greatest shame and torment to you? Do you hate your own evil heart as you would the grave itself if you were about to be cast into it? Has the law of God entered your heart, and does it work within, to the extent that the Simon-like thoughts are a pain and shame to you? Does the praise of men puff you up and make you very happy? And what about their silence and absence—is it something you cannot get over? Is he a good man who follows you and applauds your every deed? and is he a bad man who prefers Philip, Peter, and John to Simon?

Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Neither are the self-discerning men mocked, but your ways and doings are open. Can it yet be said of us as of Simon, that we are still in the "gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity," because we do not get the attention we crave? It is said that Themistocles could not sleep because of the huzzas that filled the streets of Athens when Miltiades walked abroad. Does the popularity or the rapid advancement or promotion of another embitter us and make our inner life miserable?

The last day will discover whether Simon the sorcerer repented, and that day will also disclose your inner heart and mine. It will reveal whether the self-seeking traits are crucified within and whether we have taken this lesson to our individual hearts or whether we have passed it lightly.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. . . Thou desirest truth in the inward parts. . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Meditations

On the Word

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. —Acts 8: 5—25.

Besides being a historic account of a successful missionary enterprise, in the above narrative lies an interesting character study which Luke was careful to record, and which provides excellent material for the study of self-exaltation and humility.

The principal convert of Philip's evangelism in Samaria was Simon the sorcerer. Before this time Simon, by his tremendous pretensions, had the whole of Samaria at his feet. There was something about his cleverness and charlatanry that made the people actually fear, obey, and worship him as some divinity. And Simon himself, as Luke wrote, was all the while "giving out that himself was some great one." Naturally!

Philip was more than pleased with his success in Samaria and quickly sent word to the church at Jerusalem, saying in effect, "The very devil himself has been converted and has been baptized by me." Whereupon, two of the foremost apostles, Peter and John, went to superintend the great movement. And by the aid of the Holy Spirit power much was accomplished for the Lord.

But all this time Simon was such a confirmed impostor that he not only deceived Philip but in all probability he totally deceived himself. Simon marveled and wondered at the miracles that were done by the apostles, and when by the laying on of hands, Peter and John were able to bestow that power to others, he was impressed as much as anyone else, or more. But he was not truly converted.

The love of money and the still more intoxicating love of publicity and the praises of men had taken such absolute possession of him that he simply could not live out of the eyes of men. He *must* have crowds about him. His name *must* be in the mouths of men as Mr. Big. The crowds that followed Peter and John were gall and wormwood to Simon, for crowds used to carry him on their shoulders before Philip came to Samaria.

Peter undoubtedly was suspicious of Simon and when he came with money to secure the Holy Spirit power from the apostles, the sight of the bag and the blasphemous proposal nearly drove Peter beside himself, and to this day the page burns red with the old fisherman's denunciations: "Thy money perish with thee. . . . For I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

Simon's dishonesty and deceptive life reveals in this incident the sad state of such evil characters. He had lost faith in all honesty, thinking all men are dishonest in some way, that all men have their price. Here is money, and if this is not enough I know where there is more, he said. It is a pitiful state to be in—to think that honesty, virtue and higher standards do not exist.

"Giving out that himself was some great one"! That is the first lesson about Simon. Let those take the lesson to heart who especially need it; let them humble themselves to receive it. Do not evade the issue and say, That is good for Brother So-and-So. The human heart is so deceitful that it has a way of cloaking its grossest sins by pretenses of righteousness.

It may be sorcery and witchcraft like Simon; it may be the honors of the Kingdom like the sons of Zebedee; it may be preaching sermons, making speeches, writing books. It may be anything you like, down to your children's possessions and performances; but we all, to begin with, give ourselves out to be some great one. Simon the sorcerer was but an exaggerated specimen of every popularity-hunter among us.

The desire for popularity, for importance, is not basically evil, but as perhaps the strongest of human drives, it is behind much that is good and beneficial. It is when it is not controlled by higher ethics, when it is sought merely for selfish reasons, when the desire is to exalt an already inflated ego, that it becomes obnoxious.

Popularity was the very breath of life of that charlatan of Samaria. He could not live, he could not work, he could not be converted and baptized without popularity. All Samaria must give heed to Simon or life is barren; and so it still is with his successors. Whoever we are, whatever we do, few there be who can go on living and working out of sight and all the time with sweetness, contentment, good will and a quiet heart. Are we of these few? Self-discernment is the highest and rarest of all sciences on earth. Its need is urgent if we are to overcome those Simon-like characteristics.

Now, you are not an impostor by profession as was Simon. You do not make your living by deluding people. You earn your livelihood by honest toil or a legitimate business. But there may very easily be an element of self-delusion and self-imposition in your supposed sincerity as a follower of Christ. Outwardly you may appear well. Your deeds and your speeches in defense of the Way may sound good. But is your heart right in the matter? Is the

(Continued on preceding page)

Your Questions Answered

Do you have a question? Personal replies to Biblical questions will be sent to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

My position, doing a man's work on a farm, makes it more convenient to dress in men's clothing. Is this lawful for a Christian woman?

The Book states the law which we must abide by to be godlike: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 22: 5). Other women in parallel circumstances have conformed their dress to the scriptural demand of "modest apparel" (I Tim. 2: 9, 10); yet have been highly efficient on the farm.

The fact that women have imitated men in their dress and have gone to extremes in indecency has had much to do with lowering the standards of womanhood.

Are all humanity God's children?

There is one sense in which God is called the Father of all the human family in that He gives everyone this mortal life with its many attendant blessings, sending the sunshine and showers on the good and bad alike (Acts 17: 25, 28). But He considers a part of His immediate family only those who learn His law and attempt to apply it to their daily living. Those who are successful in this will become His divine family, sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty (II Cor. 6: 17, 18). Those who fail are "children in whom is no faith" (Deut. 32: 20), "rebellious children" (Isa. 30: 1), "children of the kingdom . . . cast out" (Matt. 8: 12).

If there is no Holy Spirit today do you believe there are any miracles performed?

The "miracle campaigns" where "healings" are now performed are the result of animal magnetism, emotionalism, etc., not Holy Spirit power as during the apostolic commission which ceased when the perfect or written law was completed (I Cor. 13: 8-10) at the end of the Jewish world (*aion*—age), about A. D. 70.

At that time real miracles, which brought indisputable conviction, were performed: the feeding of the multitude, the raising of the dead, the blind eyes made to see, etc., were instantaneous and lasting, and entirely without price. Not only as wonderful works but "*greater works than these*," Jesus promised, shall be performed when He returns (John 14: 3, 12).

Will you explain the three classes, showing how mankind are divided into these three groups?

First, there are the masses of mankind who simply enjoy this life with no thought of the future. They never become acquainted with, or concerned about, God's law, some even denying there is a God. They—not being under God's law—simply pass out of existence with neither reward nor punishment, only extinction. (See Job 21: 7, 8, 11-15; Ps. 49: 19, 20; Jer. 51: 57; Obadiah 16.)

Then there are those who have heard and accepted the Gospel call. These are divided into two groups, faithful and unfaithful servants of God, described as sheep and goats, wheat and tares, etc., both of which must appear at Judgment to receive according to their works (Matt. 25: 14; II Cor. 5: 10; Rev. 22: 12; Acts 24: 15; Rom. 1: 18).

October 5, 1957

WHEN EARTH BEHOLDS HER KING

(Continued from page 5)

and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory;* and they shall declare my glory among the nations" (R.S.V.). The first to escape of the nations, the "survivors" will be elected as missionaries to instruct the heathen. As men submit to the new order, they are spared. Onward conversion spreads until "there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord" (Zech. 8: 20-22).

How transcendently beautiful the picture of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues turned toward Jerusalem for light and understanding and healing!

"Peace! The perfect word is sounding, like a universal hymn,
Under oceans, over mountains, to the world's remotest rim.

"Light! At last the deadly arrows of the Archer find their mark.
Loathsome forms are shuddering backward to the shelter of the dark.

"Hope! The nations stand together on the borders of a dawn
That shall dim the noonday splendor of the ages that are gone.

"Peace, and light, and hope of morning! Let the belfries reel and sway
While the world is swinging swiftly out of darkness into day.

"Let the forests and the steeples, blown by one compelling wind,
Swing and sway and clash together one vast peal for all mankind,

"While we roll up out of darkness, out of death, out of the gloom
Of a blighted planet plunging blindly downward to its doom;

"Into light beyond our dreaming, into peace, good will toward men,
Hope beyond the poet's vision, joy beyond the prophet's ken."

Next Issue: ESTABLISHING THE KINGDOM

* "To Tarshish, Put, and Lud," etc. "To Africa, and Lydia, them that draw the bow: into Italy, and Greece, to the islands afar off, to them that have not heard of me, and have not seen my glory" (Douay).

KEEPING PROMISES

(Continued from page 8)

for truth by our example? Our example is seen daily by those about us, but unfortunately it may not always be as good as we want it to be, or as good as we can make it. While we are waiting for a great opportunity, we may be missing the smaller everyday opportunities for cheerfulness, kindness, or the keeping of promises to another.

Before God, we are as little children and He has made promises to us. We can rest assured that He will not forget. But we have made promises to serve Him, and we must be careful to keep our promises. God's promises are conditional. God has said, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword." It all depends on us. As truly as we keep the commandments which we agreed to keep, God will fulfill what He has promised.

Reflections on the Grace of God

Titus 2: 11, 12

Sleepless
I arise and sit awhile,
Surrounded by darkness,
To muse and meditate
Upon this grace of God
That brings salvation.
For it has appeared to all men,
Teaching us
That denying ungodliness
And worldly lusts
We should live soberly,
Righteously and godly
In this present world.

Begone, then, ungodliness,
And every wretched thought,
And temptation
That would separate us
From the love of God;
That would drag us down
Into the pit.
Begone, sweet, sugar-coated wiles
That would deceive,
And offer us release
From the conflict.
Begone, thou intriguing design
That would say,
"The battle's won,
The war is done,
Now take your ease,
You've done enough
To gain His favor."

Loose not the tension,
Release not the brakes
Until the very summit
Be gained.
Lest, while on the upgrade,
You lose what you have wrought,

Stumbling backward,
Plummeting downward,
Down, down,
Never to recover.

To live soberly,
Righteously and godly
In this present world
Must take strong, constant self-possession,
Vigilance,
So long as this present world endures.
Be on guard, my soul,
Against one breath
Of that subtle anesthetic
Of foolish talking,
Thinking,
Acting.
There is no moment given
To step aside,
To inhale the luring perfume
Of laxity and idleness,
Or indifference.
'Tis more deadly
Than exhaust fumes,
Odorless gases;
Undetectable
Except by the instantly alert.

If the fort be gained,
Hold it.
Be found ready,
Waiting.
"Occupy till I come," said Jesus.
Rest only
In the shadow of His wings.
Mightily fortified,
In a sober, righteous, godly manner.
Wait patiently for Him,
O my soul!

—T. M. T.



Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Establishing the Kingdom

PRECIOUS MOMENTS

A MAIDEN'S FAITH

PAUL THE MISSIONARY

WHATEVER YOUR LOT — BUILD

MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

BUILDING THE WALL